

A TRIBUTE TO "WEE GRANNY" MARY MURRAY MURDOCH
WHO DIED IN 1856 AT CHIMNEY ROCK

On the broad plans of Nebraska stands a lonely sentinel--majestic Chimney Rock!
What stories it could tell If only it could speak I'd say "Old Rock , do you recall
The Mormon handcart pioneers who came late in the fall of eighteen hundred and fifty-six?
One of the Martin band was my little Scottish Grandma, enroute to the promised Land.
On the purple heathered highland she had spent her childhood days,
There she won a fine Scotch laddie with her sweet and winning ways.
Eight wee bairns blessed their humble home, and the cup of happiness they quaffed.
When the brave kind husband tried to save a dying man from a gas filled shaft,
Both lost their lives. Then my Wee Grandma raised her family alone,
She taught them thrift and work, and love of truth, and kin, and home.
In a rough stone, thatch roofed cottage she watched her family grow,
And saw them choose mates of their own and from her fireside go.
In 1850, the elders came from Christ's Church of latter-days,
The Gospel in its fulness swelled her soul with joy and praise that she could know.
Salvation's plan while still she lived on earth, and with some of her children,
Be baptized and have new birth. As time passed she longed for Zion where her son had
Found a home. For the first time in seventy three years, Wee Granny began to roam.
She bade farewell to loved ones, looked last at the bonnie braes,
Alone but happy pilgrim, she set out upon her way. Across the wide Atlantic in sailing
Vessel tossed, from New York on to Iowa, but she counted not the cost on her frail and
Aging body for her spirit was so strong, and she felt so close to Utah, she could travel
Right along. With the Martin handcart company, the last to leave, her unhappy lot was cast.
Their handcarts broke, their food was scarce, they felt the chilling blast of a hard and
Early winter, but bravely they went along, in their hearts a prayer to God, and on their
Lips a song." Perhaps old chimney Rock would speak with the voice of the sighing wind....
"I saw that last brave handcart band and my stone heart wept within.
Scores of women, children, aged from a mild and gentle land combatting hunger, fear
And weariness, 'twas more than the strong could stand. At my side these brave souls
Huddled, sick and dying, cold and weak, but no complaining word or grumble did I ever
Hear them speak. I longed to reach my rough arms out, and lift them as they fell,
But they sang as they buried their many dead, 'All is well--all is well'."
I lift my head with pride and reverence--"my Wee Granny's buried at you feet, How she
Longed to enter Utah the saints and her son to meet. She was never known to murmur,
She did her tasks both large and small. With her life she loved the gospel, and for it
She gave her all. When her weary life was ebbing, with her eyes turned to the west---
"Tell my son John I faced Zion when I died, he'll know the rest."
She truly was a saint, Chimney Rock, you're the monument to show the hallowed ground
Wherein she lies, you're the sign to make us know how much we owe Wee Granny for the
Blessed gospel light. Oh may we never fail her, but keep her ideals bright.

Written by Virginia D. Christensen
for reunion 1956-100 years after
Wee Granny passed away.

"SUNRISE AT CHIMNEY ROCK"

What solemn thoughts pervade the soul
As on this scene we meditate
This resting place for wearied saints
Tired, travel stained and desolate.

This scene portrays in vivid ways
A spot made dear on journey drear
By hand cart means in early days
A halfway place on journey here.

Impelled by faith and filled with hope
That soon they'd reach the appointed place
In wed to toil, with trails cope.
To Utah's vales they set their face.

But some along this dreary road
Worn out and faint, oft fell asleep
Ere they could reach the cherished spot
The Valley dear and friends to greet.

Brave honest souls at early morn
As pilgrims in a holy cause
Who dared to face a world of scorn
To obey Gods call and keep his laws.

Somewhere around the stopping place
As years go by - tis fifty seven
Wee Grannie died - there is no trace
Of earth's abode - Her soul's in Heaven.

Tell John she said as she laid down
Her worn out frame in this lone place
That I died here, but with my face
Turned Zionwards, the cherished place.

Blest be their names with fondest love
We'll cherish aye their mem'ries dear
Soon we may meet with them above
And greet them in their higher sphere.

December 24, 1913-----David L. Murdoch

She truly was a Saint. Chimney Rock, you're the monument to show
The hallowed ground wherein she lies; you're the sign to make us know
How much we owe Wee Granny for the blessed gospel light."
Oh may we never fail her, but keep her ideals bright.

Written by Virginia D. Christensen
for the 1956 reunion--100 years
after Wee Granny passed away.

Sunrise at Chimney Rock

What solemn thoughts pervade the soul
As on this scene we meditate,
This resting place for wearied Saints
Tired, travel stained, and desolate.

This scene portrays in vivid ways
A spot made dear on journey drear
By handcart means in early days,
A halfway place on journey here.

Impelled by faith and filled with hope
That soon they'd reach the appointed place
In wed to toil, with trials cope,
To Utah's vales they set their face.

But some along this dreary road
Worn out and faint, oft fell asleep
Ere they could reach the cherished spot
The Valley dear and friends to greet.

Brave honest souls at early morn
As pilgrims in a holy cause
Who dared to face a world of scorn
To obey God's call and keep his laws.

Somewhere around the stopping place
As years go by--'tis fifty-seven--
Wee Granny died. There is no trace
Of earth's abode; her soul's in Heaven.

"Tell John," she said as she lay down
Her worn-out frame in this lone place,
"That I died here, but with my face
Turned Zionwards, the cherished place."

Blest be their names with fondest love.
We'll cherish aye their mem'ries dear,
Soon we may meet with them above
And greet them in their higher sphere.

--David L. Murdoch
December 24, 1913